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21 February 1952

ONI CONTRIBUTION TO SE-22:

CONSEQUENCES OF CERTAIN POSSIBLE U.S. COURSES OF ACTION
WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA, BURMA OR THAILAND

1. The questions posed in SE-22 have been given full and careful consideration. The consequences of certain possible U.S. military courses of action with respect to Communist China and Korea were examined in SE-20. It is the belief of ONI that the reaction to military action envisaged in SE-22 would be similar to that outlined in SE-20. In addition the ONI contribution to SE-20 treats of these subjects in detail. In view of the shortness of time and the still applicable previous treatment of the subject this contribution adds only the following.
2. Although SE-20 does not include bombardment of selected targets throughout Communist China it is the view of ONI that sustained and intensive bombing of selected targets throughout Communist China could seriously reduce Chinese Communist military power, disrupt the Chinese Communist economy, and eventually jeopardize Communist control over at least some parts of south and southwest China.
3. The Chinese Communists would bring to bear maximum air defense capabilities which currently are substantial in Manchuria and North China but are slight elsewhere. Although not fully prepared at present, the Chinese Communists would almost certainly seek to reduce the US/UN bombardment or counter its effects by offensive air action against some US/UN forces and targets. They might be assisted by Caucasian volunteer air crews. The Chinese would undoubtedly attempt to invoke the Sino-Soviet treaty, and have indeed already laid the groundwork for such an invocation.

NAVY review(s) completed.

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4. The USSR could commit additional elements of its own air defense forces to action in and over Communist held areas and might make a limited number of Soviet submarines available to the Chinese Communists as "volunteers".
5. If the Communists found that the foregoing courses of action were insufficient to reduce the effects of the US/UN bombardment to acceptable proportions, and if they estimated that the consequences listed above were likely to ensue, they could commit Soviet air forces to action against some US/UN forces and targets, or they could begin negotiations to end hostilities. On balance, it is believed that in these circumstances the Communists would probably seek to end hostilities by negotiations before committing Soviet air forces over UN held areas.
6. It is believed that any decision to employ atomic weapons in and against Communist China would of necessity be a unilateral US decision. The political and psychological reaction to the employment of such weapons would not be limited to China, but would be world-wide and would be incalculable. It is possible, however, that the U.S. might, as a result of such action, find itself morally isolated from the rest of the world.

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